3. Feasts and Manners

572 The word compere [literally: pal] is in usage in all of the
177 islands where there are Caribs -- among the French when they trade with their Carib friends, and among the Caribs when they speak in French to those with whom they have become friends. A Frenchman gives his name to a Carib and the Carib gives his name to the Frenchman. Even if he does not give such a man his trade, at least he prefers him to others, and this does not fail to give him some profit. [320]

422 The Caribs have so few belongings that they are able to carry all of them with them, without having any desire to acquire more.
437 Thus when the Caribs have a tortoise which they want to exchange for a knife, they will not trade it if you should offer them two axes for it. The reason is that they have a need for the knife, although the axes are worth more. Our own possessions, although high-priced and scarce, would have no value among them. [291] The Caribs do not use terms for buying and selling. They ask without haggling and one gives the article to them for that which is offered without difficulty. [312]

●511 The Caribs cannot fail to rank as church paupers, and to have the love of Jesus Christ, and to be accepted by the Kingdom of Heaven. For they possess neither gold nor silver and they have neither bag nor wallet, nor coat nor staff, and they do not even have the desire to obtain them. A hut to protect them from the elements satisfies their ambition. Tomali [tamale?] is their stew, and crabs are the
415 most delicate food that they have. Calabashes serve them for crockery, and baskets serve as chests. Earthen pots are used as kettles and cauldrons. When they change islands and when they go to another
574 [264] carbet, drink and food are not refused them. They reciprocate equally to others in a similar situation, provided that the others do not arrive too late, for they save nothing for the following day. [316] The Caribs ask fearlessly, and give freely, when they have something. [273]

574 The Caribs have their accustomed civilities. One particular man
576 is in charge of receiving those who visit. He makes ready a hammock for them if they are important, or a stool if they are common, and has them sit. He summons a woman who carries to the guest a small wicker table which is laden with cassava and other things and it is set in front of him. Then the man in charge says, "My compere, this is for you to eat." The visitor replies with a thank you. If the cassava is unfolded

461 night. If they build a pirogue or a house it takes them an entire year to do the work. When they stay in their houses, some make baskets and others make oars which they smooth with glass or with pumice stone; and others rock themselves in their hammocks, talk, or play the flute. These occupations do not break their arms. They 1A [142] all are of good size, muscular, thick-set and well-proportioned, although their food is poor and meager. As a consequence they are not energetic. The women are scarcely more diligent for they need six months or even years to make one cotton hammock. They work ● 511 in the morning making cassava, cooking, and watching their children. After eating they go to their garden, harvest manioc, clear the spot, dig the ditches, and replant it. Then they come back with their burdens and give their husbands dinner and then they themselves eat. They peel and grate the manioc and squeeze it. These are the ordinary occupations of the women and of the wives of captains as well. [200]

The Carib women go to their gardens every day to dig sweet potatoes or manioc, and the wives of the captains go just as the others do. After they have uprooted the crop they clean the soil and replant the manioc or potatoes. They do not use spades, nor hoes, because they are not accustomed to them, but use a sharp stick. They dig the soil with it and make a ditch for manioc, then go back loaded with their full carrying basket. [149]

241 The Caribs don't use our vegetables. They have gardens instead of fields and vineyards. They obtain from them bread and oüicou, that is to say they grow manioc and sweet potatoes. This is what we call our plantations. This is different from the Caribs for whom houses and carbet are separated from gardens. They dig one hole here and there, different from the French whose gardens and houses are not scattered. [281]

"I have planted manioc wood" is the expression for saying "I sowed or planted." The main cultivation of the country are roots produced by a small tree. When it is uprooted and the root is taken, one cuts the wood into pieces as long as fingers which are placed into the cultivated ground with a digging stick. These produce other small manioc trees with roots. [96]

313 Every evening groups of women go to the woods carrying axes to split sandlewood which they cut into little splinters. They put

1A [i.e., the Caribs.—Analyst]